



The Early Stages of Christianity in England.

LECTURE DELIVERED BY

REV. DR. O'BRIEN

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MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

The subject which I have chosen for my Lecture, is one of importance and general interest to every intelligent citizen. It is, "Early Stages of Christianity in England." As Christians and subjects of the great British Empire, we must ever take a peculiar pleasure in tracing the introduction, and subsequent vicissitudes, of the Christian Religion among the hardy Britons and their Saxon conquerors. Great minds look back to the past, as well as forward to the future. Authentic History teaches many wholesome lessons, and dissipates many long-standing prejudices; it also serves to save us from that puerile insanity, so common among shallow writers of our day, viz., that we, our age and generation, sum up, embody and express all greatness and knowledge. The man who lives only in the present is like the blind worm in the kernel of a nut, unconscious of the glorious light without. Only an ignorance of the History of Christianity in England could give birth to those controversialists, who fill the world with empty sound, and create an imaginary Church after their own heart.

History has its lessons, but we must read them aright. We must not jump at conclusions; we must carefully feel our way to them. We are not to distort facts in order to make them conform to our wishes; we are not to accept idle tales, and vague conjectures, for facts, simply because they fall in with our preconceived ideas. To arrive at historic truth, we must examine the foundations of traditionary deeds; we must compare and collate authorities; we must impartially sift the various testimonies adduced. We must strive to view the panorama of events with an observant eye, and with a mind anxious only to learn the truth. If some long-hugged delusion has to be renounced, because facts are against it—give it up without a sigh, for, if it be only a delusion, it is not worth possessing; if some cherished idol falls from its lofty pedestal, withered by the light of truth, rejoice in its downfall, since it is only a false deity. In a word, freely give up the false, and eagerly embrace the true. It is only by doing this that we vindicate our reason, or can hope to profit by the study of History.

In preparing this Lecture, many authorities have been consulted, and that which is certain has been separ-

ated from the doubtful. Only that which can stand the test of a critical scholar is affirmed. The sneering of a Gibbon, or the brilliant romancing of a Froude in the pathways of History, are alike foreign to our purpose. We are afraid of no scientific, or historic truth; we gladly embrace each and every truth in any, and every department of human knowledge, with a firm conviction that no one truth can contradict another, and no amount of them can be inimical to our best interests. But we do not accept fanciful theories, or illogical conclusions for proved facts.

For the sake of perspicuity we shall divide this discourse into two parts: the first will treat of the progress of Christianity in England until the final conversion of its inhabitants; the second will consider the relation of the British Church to the rest of Christianity, and particularly to Rome.

The early Britons were a branch of the great Celtic family which colonized western Europe. It is not to our purpose to trace their descent. Pagan poets were ambitious of having some god, or the earth itself, as the progenitor of their race; modern writers generally claim a remote ancestry for their countrymen. Hence fanciful Englishmen bring to their shores one of the survivors of the flood. Julius Cæsar is the first writer who gives us any accurate knowledge of Britain. He made a descent on the Island A. C., 55, but although partly successful, he soon retired into Gaul. In the following spring another landing was effected by the Roman army, but the victories of Cæsar did not make him master of Briton. It was not until the time of the Emperor Claudius, A. D., 52, that the power of Rome was established solidly in England. Caractacus the brave King who for years had held the Roman legions at bay, was taken prisoner, and was led a captive to Rome. Claudius is said (Tacitus Vit. Agric., cxiv) to have given him several cities over which his descendants ruled.

In the interval, between the first invasion of England and the success of Claudius, the most important event of the world's history had transpired; our

Divine Saviour had been born, had preached, had died, had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven. He had founded his Spiritual Kingdom, the Church, which was to last to the end of time, and against which the power of hell was never to prevail. He had given all power to St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and had founded on him, as on a firm rock, His Holy Church. (Matt. xvi, 18.) The command of preaching "the Gospel to every creature," had been imposed upon the Apostles, and they were busy following it out.

It is contended by some that St. Peter visited England; by others that St. Paul preached there. There is no good historic foundation for either sentence. In the case of St. Paul we may almost conclude with certainty that he never visited Britain. All his wanderings are minutely recorded; the various points of landing are laid down; had he ever visited English soil the fact would be clearly mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, or in some of his Epistles. It is known that St. Peter was absent from Rome for some years, and as he, in all probability, founded Churches in Gaul, he may possibly have crossed the channel. But we have no historic certainty of this. There were Christians, however, in England during the life of the Apostles. From the domestic history of the Church of Rome we learn that Pudens, a senator, entertained the Apostles, and that his palace became a Church. His wife Claudia was a British lady, and undoubtedly a Christian. Pompona Græcina, the wife of the procurator Plantius, would seem from Tacitus (Ann. xiii, 32,) to have been, likewise, a Christian. These, and others who passed from Rome to England, would doubtless help to spread the true Faith.

Owing to the political relations between Rome and the rest of the then known world, Christian truth could easily be propagated from that great centre. Hence we see the wonderful Providence of God in directing the steps of St. Peter to Rome, and causing him to fix his See in that Eternal City. Without doubt, some who conversed in

Rome with St. Peter, perhaps Pudens, or his wife Claudia, may have helped to introduce the light of Christianity into England, and hence the tradition that it came from St. Peter. We will not, however, dwell on conjectures. Tertullian, who wrote before the close of the second century, attests (Adv. Jua. VII.) that "places in Britain, inaccessible to the Romans, were subjected to Christ." Therefore Christianity had passed the line of forts set up by Agricola between the Firth of Forth and the Clyde, and had made converts amongst the warlike Caledonians.

From the foregoing we are sure that the Christian Religion was early introduced into England, and that it soon extended its conquests. But we have now an important fact, proved from three distinct sources, it is: that Lucius, a king in Britain, and a near descendant of Caractacus, upon whom, as we saw, Claudius bestowed some cities, sent to Pope Eleutherius, about the year 161, begging to "be made a Christian by his command." The venerable Bede, the great Anglo-Saxon historian (Hist. I.C. 4, and Chron. 173) thrice mentions this fact; it is, also, attested by Nennius, and confirmed by the Roman Acts of Pope Eleutherius. Of its truth there can be no reasonable doubt. It can be gleaned from this that there were Christians at that period in England, from whom Lucius, who is called, in his own language, *Lever Maur*, or great light, had heard of Christianity, and of its acknowledged head on earth—the Pope. In fact, the narrative goes on to say that he sent Fagan and Dervan to Rome to be *better instructed* in the Religion, and that they were ordained by Pope Eleutherius; and on their return to Britain established churches after the manner of those on the Continent. From this authenticated statement we can safely conclude that there had been previously persons professing the Christian Religion in England, but no regular form of church government; and that the Roman Pontiffs here, as elsewhere, established a hierarchy in communion with themselves. It was some few years after this Tertullian

trated further into Britain than the Roman arms.

We have no authentic documents to throw light on the proceedings of the Hierarchy thus founded by Eleutherius. From the words of Tertullian we can gather that they were not idle, and that the work of conversion went steadily on. Moreover, in incidental allusions to the Church of Britain by writers in the third century, it is named with those of Gaul and Spain, thereby showing that, like them, it was firmly established, and had a regular form of government. That it must have been so is conclusively proved from the fact that in 314 three English bishops, Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, and Adelphus of Lincoln, attended a Council held at Arles. We have this on the authority of Eusebius (V. 23) Socrates (V. 21), and Labbei, in his collections of the Councils (I. 1430). Christianity was thus in a flourishing condition in the beginning of the fourth century.

During the first three centuries fierce persecutions raged, at various times, against the Church throughout the Roman Empire. In Britain, however, the Christians, either through the good will of Prefects, or on account of the unsettled state of the country harassed by the unsubdued tribes, escaped unmolested until the reign of Dioclesian and Maximian. Those tyrants ordered a general persecution; Churches were to be destroyed; death was the penalty of refusal to adore false gods. Constantius, father of the great Constantine, was Cæsar and chief ruler in Britain. He was a mild prince and opposed to persecution. Eusebius, the historian (V. Cons. I. 16) and Sozomenus (I. 6), relate an action of his well worthy of our admiration. He made known to the Christians around his palace the orders of the Emperors, and pointed out that they must abjure Christ or resign their positions. The few who preferred apostacy to loss of worldly goods, he scornfully dismissed, avowing that he would never trust men who were false to their God. Who can say that this may not have obtained for him the glory of being the father of the first Christian Emperor? Notwithstanding

this mildness on the part of Constantius, a violent persecution broke out, brought about by lesser officials. We are told that churches were overthrown, that many suffered for the Faith, and others fled to the mountains. Bede relates the death of St. Alban, protomartyr of England. His blood, in 304, sanctified the soil of his country, and his glory still hovers around the land he loved: let us hope that his prayers may win back his people to the Faith for which he died. Gildas, a British writer of the sixth century, gives many interesting particulars of that time of trial (VII., VIII.). The persecution was fierce, but it did not last long: Dioclesian and Maximian resigned; and under Constantius and Galerius, Gildas states, the Britons enjoyed freedom to serve the living God. It was a few years after these events that the three bishops, mentioned above, attended the Council of Arles. Hence we find that the short-lived persecution had no lasting injurious effects on the fortunes of Christianity; the blood of martyrs is ever the fruitful seed of Christians. Then, as now, our Holy Church triumphed over her enemies, and conquered by her constancy in suffering.

It is worthy of note that monasticism in Britain, as elsewhere, early took root. Whilst Christians knew that marriage was a holy state, they likewise knew that celibacy was a holier. On account of its difficulty it had not been imposed by Christ, it had only been counselled. The lesson of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. ch. vii) had sunk into the hearts of many. They pondered the words (v. 34) "and the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband." And then they looked at the Apostles' wish (v. 7) "for I would that all men were even as myself." Hence, from the beginning, chosen souls, taking St. John, St. Paul and our Immaculate Mother for their models, were led on to tread the lofty heights of perpetual virginity. They were those souls who, under an impulse of divine grace, longed to

be one of that band mentioned in the Apocalypse (ch. xiv, 3-4) who sing in heaven a canticle none other can sing, to be one of those "who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. Those follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Such souls as these first began the monastic orders. That these orders existed in Britain before the end of the fourth century is certain for about the year 406 a certain Constantius, who afterwards became Cæsar, is said to have been a Monk at Winchester; and Pelagius was certainly a lay monk during that period. Thence we find Bishops, Priests, Monks and Nuns in England whilst it was yet subject to the Roman Emperors. This is an important reflection for Englishmen to-day.

We cannot, in a short lecture, follow step by step the march of Christianity in Britain. We find it now firmly established, with its saints and martyrs; its Bishops attending Councils, whose decrees were sent to Rome for approval; and its monks and nuns living a life of celibacy. We find it, as we find the Church in Italy or France to-day,—and this before the end of the fourth century.

When the power of the Roman Empire began to wane political complications arose in England. We shall take no other note of them than to say that Honorius, about the year 411, seems to have admitted his inability to protect them, and to have told them to provide for themselves. The past incursions of the Picts and Scots, and the subsequent internal disorders, were not, it may be presumed, conducive to the best interests of Religion. Pelagius the author of the Heresy known as Pelagianism, was a Briton; his disciple Agricola, endeavored to spread the error in England. The British Bishops appealed for help to those of France. Prosper in his chronicles [Ad Annum 429] tells us that Pope "Coelestine sent Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, in his place, so that the heretics being overcome he might guide the Britons according to the Catholic Faith." "This is confirmed by Bede, and by the writer of the life of Germanus [Constan. Vit. S. Germ. 28.] The Bishop of Auxerre, as papal delegate,

thence twice to England, in 429 and 446. In the first occasion he was accompanied by Lupus of Troyes, and on the last by Severus of Treves. We thus see how intimate was the union between the Gallic and British Church, and the Roman Pontiff. As delegate of the Pope Germanus condemned and repressed Pelagianism. Another important fact in this connection must not be omitted. Prosper (Lib. Cont. Collat. C. 21 to 58) tells us that Pope Celestine ordained Palladius Bishop of the Scots and liberated Britain from the disease of Pelagianism, and whilst he strove to keep the Roman Island Catholic, from being barbarous he made it Christian." We have extant a short treatise "De Vita Christiana," or a christian life, by Fastidius, a British Bishop, who lived about this period. It is published in Migne's Collection; although it seems infected with the error of Pelagius, it shows fair scholarship. But, according to contemporary writers, Pelagianism was suppressed in England by the exertions of the papal delegate St. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre. This was early in the fifth century.

A dreary period now succeeds for the British Church and the British nation. Saxons are invited over by Vortigern to assist him in maintaining peace within his borders. History has related how, after a time, more Saxons came over, and began to occupy the country for themselves. The mighty Roman Empire was tottering to its fall; hordes of Northern barbarians swept over the face of Europe. Old customs and institutions were overthrown; the civilization of ages went down before the savage barbarism of Frank, and Hun, and Goth, and Saxon. England did not escape. Expedition after expedition landed on her shores; the Britons were driven from their possessions, and forced to seek safety in Wales, and the North of England. Murder and pillage filled the land; those of the Britons who escaped slaughter, were now either slaves in their former holdings, or lurking in the mountain defiles, or struggling to live on the inhospitable Welsh Hills. The Saxons were pagans; hence Churches were destroyed; the pastors slain, or

in exile; the flocks scattered forever. A few sects still professed the Christian Faith, but the British Church, as a Church, ceased to exist in its former home. So fully was it obliterated, that few of its ancient landmarks and boundaries can be assigned with certainty. Yet the Faith did not perish; it took refuge in another portion of the Island. The Britons who were driven from the Southern parts of their country, and who established themselves in Wales, and the North, carried their Faith with them, and set up new Altars, not so grand as those desecrated by the Saxon, but on which Bishops and Priests still offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We can easily understand that surrounded by the horrors of war, compelled to fight for life, and cut off from communication with Europe, religion must have suffered sorely. Gildas, who wrote in the sixth century, draws an unfavorable picture of the lives of some of the Clergy. He was their countrymen, but their faults are not spared; perhaps, they are, on this account, rather exaggerated. It would be strange, indeed, if in the midst of such ignorant and lawless surroundings, religion should not suffer. I merely ask you to observe that during nearly 150 years of carnage and lawlessness the British Church, though transplanted, did not cease to exist, and keep its ancient Faith.

In the meantime, piratical fleets filled the straits, and assaulted the maritime towns in France, Spain, and England. All Europe was overrun, and the world seemed to have been plunged back into hopeless barbarism. And so, indeed, it would have been had it not been for the Church of God. M. Guizot, a Protestant Historian, bears testimony to this. He says, (Hist. Univer. pp. 55, 53): "From the 5th century, the Christian Clergy had powerful means of influence. The Bishops and Clerks had become the chief municipal magistrates. * * * The Bishops, and the Priests, full of life and zeal, naturally offered themselves to superintend and to manage everything. It would be absurd to blame them for it, or to tax them with usurpation; the natural course of

things would have it so; the Clergy alone were morally alive and vigorous; they became powerful everywhere; such is the law of the universe. * * * The Christian Church has powerfully contributed since that time, to the development of modern civilization. * * * If the Christian Church had not been in existence, the whole world would have been abandoned to pure material force. The Church alone exercised a moral power. But she did more; she kept up and diffused the idea of a rule, of a law superior to all human laws; she professed the belief essential to the safety of humanity, that there is a love all human laws another law."

These words of a great historian ought to be pondered upon by the blatant and ignorant, who revile the Church of the past, and blaspheme what they do not understand. They will, also, serve to explain the intense hatred of modern infidels against our Church. Now, as in the past, could our Church cease to exist, the triumph of brute force would be secure.

Amidst all the horrors, then, of that dreary period the Church of God was at work, true to her mission. Her supreme Pastors, the Popes, were ever at their post. Now the Great Leo confronts and turns back the haughty Attila, called by himself the scourge of God; now he stays the advancing Genseric; now he summons a Council and condemns the impiety of the Eutychians. Or now it is Pope Agapitus who negotiates a peace between Theodatus, King of the Goths, and the Emperor Justinian. Now it is Pope John III. who is addressed by Cassiodorus, prefect of the Praetorium, in these terms: "You are the Chief of the Christian people; under your name of Father you direct everything. The security of the people depends upon your fame and power. We have minor responsibilities in the administration of affairs, but the supreme authority is yours." Thus the Church, led by her Pontiffs, triumphed peacefully over the barbarian hordes, subdued them to Christ, and laid the foundations of civilized Europe. This was accomplished, in great part, before the year 800.

Towards the end of the 6th century England was divided by its Saxon conquerors into seven, or as some assert, eight kingdoms. As already seen, the Britons were slaves in the field kingdoms, and paganism ran its rampant course through the land. But the long night of England's gloom was soon to have its glorious dawn. A mighty Pope had been chosen to rule the Church, Gregory the Great. If ever a man was being deserved that title it was success he. Great in virtue, great in learning, great in thought, great in action, he was a fitting successor of an illustrious line, and worthy to be the Apostle of the greatest Empire of the world. We can form an adequate idea of the manifold labors of this noble Pontiff, only by reading his epistles that he gave divine instructions and commands to the Bishops of Sicily, of Dalmatia, of Gaul, of Greece to the King of France; to the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem and Antioch. His spirit seemed to pervade the whole Church, and his zeal to animate its pastors. The eclipse caused by barbarian irruptions had passed, and the spouse of Christ was now putting on her glorious robes with heavenly beauty. But Gregory was not satisfied with directing the movement of the Church in its then limits; he longed to conquer to Christ other nations. He turned his eyes toward England, and his noble soul was filled with compassion for the fate of its children. He resolved to win it to God. He had, previous to his election to the pontifical dignity, built a monastery near the site of the Coliseum, and now from amongst its inmates, he chose forty monks to bear the "glad tidings of great joy" to England. The head of this band of missionaries was called Augustine, or Austin, afterward Abp. of Canterbury. Imagine the scene in that humble monastery where the band was about to set forth; think of the times and the difficulties of travelling. They are all gathered in the chapel; mass had been said; their wallets are strapped to their backs; staves are in their hands. They bear with them the Bible, missals, chalice, and all the necessities for celebrating the sacrifice of the Mass and adminis-

consecrating the Sacraments. For their own sake they carry little or nothing. God, as he feeds the birds of the air, will feed them; God, who clothes the lilies of the field with splendor, will provide them in raiment. This is their faith; for they are going to do God's work, and he will not forget his laborers. They are all assembled before the altar, hushed down in adoration before the Eucharistic Sacrament, praying for the success of their mission. The noble Gregory himself is amongst them; he longs to be one of their number, but strictly keeps him in Rome. Now he ascends the step of the altar and addresses them in fervent language. He reminds them of their duties, and the hardships to be undergone, and bids them pray if not ready to suffer much. God's divine Spirit fills his heart, and gives unction to his burning words of exhortation. His hearers burn with a kindled zeal, and declare themselves ready to start. Then Gregory lifts up his hands and blesses them in the name of the Holy and undivided Trinity, and sends them forth, as Christ sent his Apostles, to preach and to baptize. He gives them the kiss of peace, and then that band, with no thought, or hope of earthly reward, or comfort, turns away from the chapel, whilst the remaining monks break forth into the joyous anthem: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who evangelize good tidings, who make known peace." Truly Divine Faith has its days of triumph.

The forty Apostles go down from the door of that monastery which is still standing, and we can do no better than quote the words of Montalambert (*Monks of the West Vol. III. page 531*) "Where is that Englishman worthy of the name who can look from the Palatine towards the Coliseum, and see before him without emotion, or remorse that little spot of earth from which came to him the Faith and the Christian name—the Bible upon which he so much boasts himself—the Church itself of which he has preserved only the phantom? Here it was that the enslaved children of his ancestors were received and rescued. Upon these stones knelt those who made his country Christian. Under that roof the

grand design was conceived by a holy soul, offered to God, blessed by God, accepted and accomplished by humble, noble noble hearted Christians. Down those steps went the forty monks who bore to England the word of God, the light of the Gospel, Catholic unity, Apostolic succession, and the rule of St. Benedict. No country ever received the gift of salvation so immediately from Popes and Monks; and also, who have so often, or so cruelly betrayed it."

St. Augustine and his band of missionaries set out for England in the year 596. Ethelbert, King of Kent enjoyed at that period the title of Bretwalda, or ruler of Britain. It is supposed, chiefly from a passage in the chronicles of Bede, that the other Kings were, in a manner vassals of the Bretwalda. The wife of Ethelbert was Bertha, daughter of Chaibbert King of Paris. She was a Christian, and had brought over with her a prelate named Lindhard. Many of the British serfs were, doubtless Christians, but the country was, in the full sense, pagan. Ethelbert heard of the arrival of the forty monks, and appointed to receive them in the open air, under a mighty oak. The historian Bede, who wrote before the end of the next century, and whose knowledge and good faith cannot be called in question, has preserved the chief points of interest connected with the mission and success of Augustine and his monks. The Apostles of England, as we may truly call Augustine, went forth to meet the King, and there was borne before him the usual weapon of Christian conquerors, the Cross, and also a banner with a picture of our Saviour depicted thereon. In a stately line the monks marched behind, singing psalms and anthems, which smote on the ears of the wondering pagans like pæans of victory. The sacred psalmody was the only sound which broke upon, and filled, the clear atmosphere. Angels looked down with smiles of delight and exulted in an approaching triumph; St. Alban, England's protomartyr, and her other Saints whose bones were resting 'neath the altar of God, knelt before the Almighty's throne, and besought grace for their country; the Queen of Heaven, seeing in the years

as yet unfallen from time's hour glass, that England would be called, on account of its devotion to her, our Lady's Dower, bowed before her Eternal Son and asked for its speedy conversion. Her prayer was granted, for after Augustine had unfolded the object of their coming, the King readily accorded them permission to preach, and promised to provide for all their wants. Now, indeed, the missionaries began to realize how sweet it is to labor for the good of souls, without the thought of earthly reward. They were conducted to Canterbury, and as they neared its gates they sang; "By thy great mercy, O Lord, turn away we beseech thee, thy anger from this city and thy holy temple, for we are sinners, Alleluia."

The Britons had, in former generations, a Church at Canterbury called St. Martin's; it had been injured by the Saxon invaders, but Queen Bertha had restored it. The monks were put in possession of this place, and began their labors. We cannot follow out their various undertakings, or narrate their various successes. Suffice it to say that the work of God progressed; the King was baptized at the following Pentecost, and on the Christmas ensuing, according to Bede [1, 26] and an Epistle of Gregory's, ten thousand Saxons were brought into the fold. It was whilst the Missionaries were yet in their first humble home that the foundations of their great work were securely laid. Montcalambert (Monks of the West Vol. III, p. 366) has the following beautiful passage concerning this time, he says: "There are days of beauty at the opening of all grand enterprises. They do not last, thanks be to the lamentable and incurable infirmity of things human. But it is important that they should never be forgotten, always honored. These are the spring flowers of beautiful lives. History has no work more important than that of bringing to us their perfume. The church of Canterbury, in the course of a thousand years, knew glories without an equal. No church in the world, after the church of Rome, has been governed by more great men, or has fought more glorious fights. But in all her annals of

glory nothing has eclipsed the sweet pure light of that humble cradle, that Cenacle, in which a handful of strangers, Italian Monks, protected the generous hospitality of a King, honorable man, and guided by the inspirations of the greatest of the Popes, labored in prayer, abstinence, and to conquer the ancestors of a generation to God, to virtue and the truth.

Ethelbert was zealous in the cause of Religion; the Monks were true to their duty, and Pope Gregory sent more Missionaries, and words of counsel and encouragement. By order of the Pope Augustine was consecrated Bishop of Canterbury by the Bishop of Arles, in France. Ethelbert assigned the new Bishop of Canterbury and the surrounding country; a former church of St. Saviour's, was restored and became the Cathedral, and the Monastery of St. Peter and Paul was built for the home of the Monks. Soon the mission extended, and Augustine consecrated Justus, one of his band, Bishop of Rochester. Ethelbert was uncle of Sabert, King of Essex, and through him the Abbot Mellitus was received in that Kingdom. Sabert was soon converted and Mellitus was made Bishop of London, about the year 604. The King of Northumbria was converted by Paulinus, a Roman Missionary about the year 626. This ecclesiastic became Bishop of York, for the Great Gregory had years before arranged that the Northern Metropolitan should reside in that city. Pope Honorius in 626 bestowed the pallium on the Bishops of Canterbury and York, that is, he raised these cities to the dignity of Archiepiscopal Sees, permitting that when one died the other might consecrate a successor without waiting to consult Rome. Thus were the two collected Archbishoprics of Canterbury and York established by the Pope, and endowed with singular privileges. And we may add that the Popes, even to our own day, have ever shown marks of predilection towards England. In 631 Felix, sent by Honorius Archbishop of Canterbury, converted the East Angles. All these particulars are related by Bede, and confirmed by the Epistles of Gregory the Great, Augustine and Pope Honorius. They

may be found in English, in Lingard's History of England.

It would be interesting to enter more fully into details, but time will not permit. We have drawn the *essential* lines of the picture; we have followed the fortunes of Christianity from its introduction amongst the early Britons, until its almost complete extinction in Southern England, by the Saxon invasions; and we have just seen how the faith was sent anew from Rome, and how it took root in the Saxon Kingdoms. Nearly a hundred years elapsed from the coming of Augustine until the total conversion of the Island was effected. During that period the Church suffered various vicissitudes of fortune; but her march was ever onward. Now a King went back to the worship of his ancestral gods, Woden and Thor; now a district threw off the restraints of christianity; still, the work founded by Augustine was not undone; the Sees of Canterbury and York, established by Honorius, continued, extended, from year to year their conquests. That same Pope sent Birinus, a foreign Bishop, to Wessex, and he brought about the conversion of its King and many thanes. Ethelbert, the first christian King, amongst the Saxons, reigned fifty-six years, and before his death published a code of laws which bear the impress of Christianity. We have, we say, drawn the outline of this part of our subject, the details must be sought in volumes of History. We have Christianity now firmly established; its Hierarchy constituted by the Pontiff; its internal organization rapidly being developed. It has now passed out of its early stages, and has begun its grand career of a thousand years.

We will now pass to a consideration of our second point, viz., the relation of the British Church to those of other countries, particularly to that of Rome. It may seem, after what has been related, unnecessary to say anything on this head, seeing how intimate were the relations between the British and other Christians. To the historian, or to those who read history, it is, indeed, needless to say one word on this point. But unfortunately much of what is called "historical research" is only

the preconceived notion of some literary dabbler, decked out in pompous phraseology, and sublimely indifferent to incontestable facts. An article, cleverly written, will appear in an English Review,—for instance the Contemporary—in which the writer evolves from his own brain the theory of an "Independent British Church." The whole literary world laughs at the romance of our would-be-historian; but his article is read on this side of the ocean, where ancient authors are little known and less studied, and is accepted by many for historic truth. Thus the illusion takes its rise, and is propagated by persons ambitious to be classed as original thinkers. Or again, another cause of this modern theory that the British Church was independent of Rome, may easily be assigned. For the last forty years there has been in England a school of learned and pious men, earnest in the pursuit of religious faith, and anxious to save their souls. Many of these, such as Manning, Newman, Oakley, Wilberforce, and others have entered the Church of their ancestors; many others, such as Pusey, Keble, Gladstone, and several others, are still without the fold. Many who belong to this school, and who are still members of the Anglican Church, feel that their position is untenable, and their salvation endangered, unless they belong to the pristine Church of their country. Hence they hug the delusion of an "Independent British Church."

The theory, then, of an Independent British Church is, that the faith was brought into England from the East not from Rome; that the British Bishops did not recognize the Pope as their spiritual superior that St. Augustine who was sent by Gregory the Great, was the first who introduced the "Papacy," or the supreme spiritual power of the Pope over all Christians, into England; that the British Bishops, then in Wales, refused to acknowledge this claim, and remained independent of Rome. The few who support this theory are composed of those who blindly hate the name of Rome, and of those pious souls who, to ease their consciences, grasp at a phantom in order to justify their re-

jection of the Roman Pontiff. We by no means insinuate that all the Ritualist hold this theory. Many of them know it to have no historical foundation. Personally it is a matter of perfect indifference to us whether, or not, the British Church rejected the authority of the Pope. Had it done so, it would simply have been cut off from all communion with the rest of the Christian world. This would have been its loss, not ours. But in the interest of historic truth, for the vindication of a great Church, such as the one in England was, and for, let us hope, the benefit of some who hang their hopes of heaven on a fancied succession from a glorious past, we will prove the falsity of this theory.

In order that our meaning may be more intelligible we will, in a few words, depict the belief of the earlier Christian Church. Gibbon, who is not a suspected authority with those who differ from us, bluntly says that the "papacy began with the Apostles." So it did; Peter was the recognized head of the apostolic body; for him our Lord prayed that he "might confirm his brethren." (Luke xxii., 32.) On him was built the Church, and to him were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Math. xvi., 13, 19); "and when there was much disputing," in the Council of Jerusalem, the words of Peter ended all controversy, and the decree of the first Council of the Church was made out (Acts xv., 7 and following to 22). The Roman Pontiffs, the successors of St. Peter, were acknowledged as spiritual heads of the Church from the earliest period. St. Ignatius, Martyr, a disciple of the Apostles, speaks of the Roman See as "*presiding in love*." St. Irenæus, another who saw the Apostles, proclaims that "every Church must have recourse to the Roman." Tertullian calls the Pope "*Pontifex Maximus*," and "*Bishop of Bishops*." St. Cyprian writes: "He who abandons the Chair of Peter, upon which the Church was founded, does he persuade himself that he is in the Church." St. Jerome, the learned, who knew Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and translated the Scriptures from the Hebrew, says: "Whosoever is not in communion with the Church

of Rome is outside the Church." At the Council of Ephesus, St. Cyril, of Alexandria, signed the Acts of the Council as "holding in the place" of the Pope, and calls him: "Father, Patriarch and Archbishop of the whole world." In that same Council, when it was said that "Peter is the foundation of the Catholic Church," and that "Pope Coelestine is his successor and holds his place," the Fathers unanimously exclaimed: "It is a just judgment." The Council of Chalcedon deposed one Dioscorus because he "had raged against the Apostolic See itself." And the sixth Ecumenical Council declared that "Peter hath spoken by Agatho," the Pope whose letter had been read. This continuous and unanimous testimony of great and holy men, of every clime, and of the first general councils in which Bishops from the East and West met, clearly proves that the Papacy, as Gibbon says, began with the Apostles. Even those who had been condemned for errors by Provincial Councils appealed to the Pope, as did Coelestius, a Scotchman, early in the fifth century. It was, then, in the period of which we treat, the universal belief of Christianity, that communion with the See of Rome, and obedience to it, were essential requirements for salvation and of the Christian name. It is well to bear this in mind, as it will, in the absence of other proofs, throw much light on our subject.

Let us now see how the British Church stood in its relations to Rome, and whether it acknowledged the supremacy of the Popes. It may readily be granted that there were Christians in England at a very early period of the Christian era; but we have no history, or tradition, of a Church until the second century. As already stated, Lucius, a British King, sent to Pope Eleutherius, asking that by "*his command*" he might be made a Christian. Evidently the first Christian king of the early Britons recognized the Pope. The Bishops sent by Eleutherius, in response to this appeal, certainly were subject to the See of Rome, and founded the British Church after the "model of those on the Continent," as Bede relates. Now we all know that the Churches on the Conti-

ment owned the spiritual supremacy of Rome. Hence Christianity, in an organized form at least, came to England from the Pope, and was planted on British soil in due subjection to him.

Forty years later, Tertullian, as quoted already, boasted that "places of Britain, inaccessible to the Romans, were subject to Christ." Now this same Tertullian owned the supremacy of Rome; for him the Pope was "Bishop of Bishops." Unless, then, these places were in communion with the Holy See he would not have called them "subject to Christ." Therefore the British Church had continued on the lines on which it had been founded.

About a century later, in 314, the Bishops of London, York and Lincoln took part in a Council at Arles, as seen above. The decrees of this Council were submitted to the approval of the Pope. Hence these Bishops recognized the supreme judicial power vested in the successors of St. Peter. It is unnecessary to enlarge on the significance of this fact: it speaks trumpet tongued in favor of what we maintain. The Council of Arles would not have admitted to its discussions Bishops "independent" of Rome; neither would such Bishops submit their decisions to the Pope. Therefore the British Church was still in communion with the rest of Christendom.

St. Alban, who suffered for the faith a few years previously, was always honored by the Church of Rome as a saint and martyr. Had he not been in communion with her she would not have done this. Moreover, Eusebius, in his life of Constantine, speaks of the British Church, at that period, as being joined to Rome. Other contemporary writers, as we said before, speak of the English Church as being on an equality with those of France and Spain. This is additional proof that at the beginning of the fourth century there was no "Independent British Church."

Coming down another century we find the British Bishops asking those of France to assist them against the errors of Pelagianism; and we saw how St. Germanus, of Auxerre, went thither as delegate of Pope Coelestine

on two occasions, and how, by his exertions, the error was suppressed. Also, the same Pope sent Palladius, as Bishop of the Scots, and, according to Prosper, cleared Britain of the heresy (quoted above). It is surely evident that if the British Church did not recognise the Pontifical authority they would not have invited, and received, a Papal Delegate; neither would they have received Palladius—a Bishop consecrated by Pope Coelestine. This happened in 429, and again in 446. Therefore early in the fifth century the English Church was still true in its allegiance to the Chair of St. Peter.

About this same period St. Dubrice was consecrated Bishop of Llandaff by Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, another certain proof of the communion of the British Church with that of Rome. We may add that St. Ninian, the earliest glory of Scotland, was consecrated Bishop in Rome, and returned to his native place and built near Galloway the first stone church seen by the Britons; they called it "Whitehouse," and, as if to confirm Bede (B. 3, C. 4), the place is still known as Whitehern. He is honored as a saint by the Roman Church, a certain proof of his communion with it.

Less than a century later we have St. David, the peculiar glory and delight of the Welsh Church, which now, on account of the Saxon invasions, was the only British Church, showing unmistakably his subjection to the Pope. At a Council of British Bishops held at Brevy, in the County of Cardigan, he was almost forced to accept the Archbishopric of Caëleon. This was in 519. Shortly after he assembled a Synod at Victoria, in which the Acts of that held at Brevy were confirmed, and the whole approved by the Pope, (Robbacher, Hist. Un. Tom. v. p. 15) clearly St. David acknowledged the Primacy of the Pope; and the Bishops who urged him to accept the dignity of Archbishop must, likewise, have been in Communion with Rome. It would be absurd to say that they would have urged him to become their Archbishop, or that he would have accepted the position, unless they were alike in faith and practice. Therefore early in the sixth century the British

Church revered the spiritual supremacy of Rome.

As further proof of this fact for this same period, we may mention that St. Thelmin, St. Patern, St. Daniel, and several others who lived, and worked in the English Church, are revered as Saints by Rome. Again, it is needless to say that this would not be unless they belonged to her Communion. For testimony regarding Scotland, we may mention the great St. Mungo Bishop of Glasgow. His relics were held in veneration in Scotland until the days of Kn x. Bishops, Saints and Councils alike indisputably prove that Christainity from its introduction until the beginning of the sixth century, in England as elsewhere, recognized the Popes as holding the place of St. Peter, with spiritual power over all.

Before in the end of that century, viz., in 596, Augustine and his Italian Monks landed in England, and founded the Anglo-Saxon Church. Their Mission and history is well known; their entire subjection to Rome is beyond dispute. The Church which they constituted received its power and Apostolic Succession from Gregory the Great, and the perfection of its Hierarchical organization from Pope Honorious. In every Synod held in England from the time of Augustine first Archbishop of Canterbury, to that of Wharham the last, it was expressly added at the end, "the rights and privileges of the Holy See being in all things preserved."

The only arguments adducted by defenders of the theory of an independent British Church, are; 1st, the Britons differed from Rome in the celebration of Easter. 2nd, The British Bishops refused to join with Augustine when he came to convert the Saxons. Those are the weak foundations on which it is sought to erect an independent Church. Let us examine them closely.

Regarding the celebration of Easter we readily grant that when Augustine came to England, the Bishops of Wales did not celebrate that Feast on the same day as the Roman Church. In the beginning of the fourth century, however, they did, as is learnt from

Eusebus (Vit. Con. iii., 19) Socrates (Hist. v., 22) and from the proceedings of the Council of Arles as noted by Spelman (p. 40, 42.) Moreover, it is to be borne in mind that this difference was not one of *Faith*, it was one of *discipline*. In the second century many Eastern Bishops differed from Rome on this point; still they were in the Communion. At the Council of Nice in 325 the dispute was settled, and a general basis of computation assigned. The difficulty had been merely an astronomical one, regarding the time of commencement of the equinoctial lunation. As we have said the Britons, at the beginning of the fourth century, celebrated Easter in accordance with the rules laid down at the Councils of Aricea. About the middle of the sixth century, or forty years before Augustine went to England, the Roman Church had adopted a new and reformed cycle of computation. Owing to the isolated condition of the British Bishops (we mean by this those in Wales) this reformation of the Calendar was unknown to them; hence, when St. Augustine arrived they necessarily differed from his mode of calculation. But any one can see that this is no proof an independent Church. It merely shows that Wales was more backward in astronomical knowledge than Rome.

Moreover, no one doubts of the entire subjection of the Irish Church, from St. Patrick to our day, to that of St. Peter; now from Bede it is certain that it was Irish monks, such as St. Columban and his contemporaries, who taught this computation of Easter; and it was an Irishman, a Bishop in Wales, and disciples of Irish Monks, who held out most strongly for their old custom. The difference, therefore, was no rejection of the due authority of the Pope.

Regarding the second argument, viz. that the British Bishops refused to join with Augustine, we will narrate the facts of the case. Gregory the Great, as may be seen from his Epistles, says to Augustine that he "commits to his care all the British Bishops, to instruct the ignorant, to strengthen the weak, and to correct the failing." Now, Pope Gregory was at least no

rat; he was endowed with sound sense, and good judgment. Would he have committed the British Bishops to the care of Augustine, if those Bishops had never recognized his power? Would Queen Victoria, in her letters to Lord Lorne, commit the Governors of the United States to his care? In the hypothesis of an "Independent British Church," we must suppose Gregory the Great to have done something as absurd as this. Therefore, Gregory was sure that the British Church recognized his supremacy. This is confirmed from his letter to Queen Brunehaut, in France; in it he says that the Angles are desirous of becoming Christians, but that the neighbouring, i. e., the British Bishops neglect to second their good desires. Had these Bishops not been in Communion with him he, certainly, would not have thought them fitting persons to convert the Angles. It is, therefore, an established fact that the Britons were still in Communion with Rome when Augustine went to England.

Yet it is true that they did not join with Augustine in converting the Saxons. This holy prelate after a time turned his attention to the British Church. He asked the Bishops to celebrate Easter with him, to adopt the Roman ritual in baptizing, and to aid him in preaching to the Saxons. Bede, who lived as near to that time as we do to that of the battle of Waterloo, distinctly states that these were the requests of Augustine. (See B. 2 c. 2) It is undeniable, therefore, that they agreed in *faith*, also Augustine would not have invited them to preach with him; had they differed in faith he would rather have sought to prevent them from preaching. The two points of difference were then matters of discipline. Owing to the ignorance of the isolated christians some abuses had crept in, but their faith was the same as ever. A fierce national spirit, or perhaps a fear of extermination, had kept, and still kept, the Britons from making any attempts to convert the Saxons, who had driven them from England into Wales. They refused to accede to the requests of Augustine. The words of this prelate, when their refusal was persisted in,

are a certain proof that he thought them one in faith; and surely he knew. He said; "you have not wished to have peace with your Brethern, you will have war with your enemies, and you will die by the hand of the English to whom you do not wish to teach the way of life." (Bede B. 2 c. 2.) These words are decisive; but we have a stronger testimony still. Dinoth who was at that time Abbot of Bangor, and one who met St. Augustine together with the Bishops, wrote to that prelate thus: "Be it known and without doubt to you that we are all, and every one (i. e. the British Christians) of us obedient and subject to the Church of God, and to the Pope of Rome." Surely this solemn avowal dissipates every shadow of an "independent church." It is true that Dinoth was only a Welshman, and a monk; still, we do think that he knew the belief of his own countrymen better than a man of the nineteenth century. Again, in the "Liber Landavensis," or records of the Church of Llandaff it is claimed that the privileges of that Church "were confirmed by the Popes of Rome." Treating of the life of St. Oudoceus who lived in 550, it says: "As the Church of Rome has dignity above all the Churches of the Catholic faith, so the Church of Llandaff exceeds in dignity all the Churches of southern Britain." From all these facts and testimonies it is historically certain that the early British Church ever recognized the supremacy of the Pope,—was ever united in bonds of charity with Rome. So well known was this, that when England had conquered Wales, and the Archbishop of Canterbury had summoned the Bishop of St. David's to recognize his jurisdiction, the Welsh bishop replied that the British Bishops had never recognized any superior *except the Holy See*. Whatever differences of practice, or disputes about Episcopal jurisdiction at any time existed between Augustine and his successors in the See of Canterbury, and the British, or Welsh Bishops, it is incontestably proved that the latter were subject to Rome, and in communion with her, until the sixteenth century. So evident is this that a great historical critic of our

day, Mr. Freeman, and one who is no lover of our Church, says; "the complete independence of the Welsh Church, of which Giraldus boasts, is without historical foundation." (History and antiquity of St. David's by W. B. Jones, and Edward Freeman c. viii p. 263,) and James Wayland Joyce, in "England's Sacred Synods," admits that King Oswy and the Synod of Whitby in 664, confessed "the Roman traditions." In that Synod uniformity of discipline was established between those who were already of one faith. Venerable Bede who wrote within twenty-five years of that Synod gives a full account of the discussion (B. 3 c. 25 26.) Colman was the chief spokesman of the British Bishops; St. Wilfrid upheld the universal practice of the Church, King Oswy, whose own wife and son differed from himself on the question of Easter, opened the conference by saying: "As we all serve the same God, and expect the same heavenly kingdom, we should all follow the same rule of life, and the same ceremonies; it is only a question of seeing which is the true tradition." These words are another proof of identity of faith; it was only a question of disciplinary observance that had to be settled. Colman was then called upon to speak. He said that he had received his usage from the persons who had sent him; and his fathers had followed it. Now Colman was an Irishman, and had been educated in Ireland. He observed the usage of the Irish Church which was ever faithful to Rome. St. Wilfrid spoke next; he showed that Rome, Asia and Africa were alike in the observance of this feast; only a few people, in a corner of two distant Islands, objected. Those who had followed their old custom in good faith, were, he said, excusable, but now that the right rule, viz., that of Rome, was known all should follow it. He ended by quoting the words of our Lord to St. Peter (Math. xvi) "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." King Oswy then asked Colman; "is it true that the Lord thus spoke to

Peter?" "Yes, Sire" answered the British Bishop. "Can you show that your Colman ever received such power?" said the King. "No," said Colman. "Do you all agree that the words were said principally to Peter, and that it was to him that the Lord gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven?" again questioned Oswy. "Yes, we all agree to that." "Well then, said Oswy, I tell you that I do not wish to go contrary to the doctrine of the keeper of heaven, but I wish to obey him in everything and with all my power, lest when I arrive at the gates of heaven there should be no one to open them, if he who holds the keys should be against me." These words of a half barbarous King deserve to be pondered by all who, like him, desire to save their souls. A uniformity of observance in matters of discipline was established, and the Saxon and British Christians were mingled together and formed the glorious Anglo-Saxon Church.

We can briefly sum up what has been said. Pope Elutherius, at the request of Lucius, sent Missionaries who established the British Church in 161. It soon spread as Tertullian proves; it had its martyrs early in the fourth century. Its Bishops sat in council with those of France in 314 and recognized the supremacy of the Pope, as the acts prove. In 429 St. Germanus of Auxerre went as Papal delegate to Britain to suppress the error of Pelagianism; about the same time Pope Celestine consecrated Palladius Bishop, and sent him thither; in 446 Germanus consecrated Dubrice Bishop in Britain; in 516 St. David, the glory of Wales, dutifully submits the decrees of his Synod to Rome. In the interval between 450 and St. David, the British Church, in England proper, had been destroyed by the pagan Saxons, and only existed in Wales and Scotland. England was at the end of the sixth century pagan. In 596 Augustine and his monks came to light again the beacon of true faith, on English shores; hence he is truly the Apostle of England. His work prospered, and within less than a hundred years all England was Christian. The British Church in Wales, by the mouth

the great Abbot of Bangor, Dinoh, assured Augustine, that they "were obedient and subject to the Church of God, and to the Pope of Rome." Soon after, uniformity of observance regarding Easter was secured. Thus we see from undoubted historic monuments that Christianity came to the Britons from Rome, and century by century we have Bishops, Saints and Councils proclaiming that they were, like the rest of Christendom, subject to the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, whom they recognized as successors of St. Peter. Then we have Gregory the Great sending Christianity to the Saxons who had invaded England; these being converted, united with the Britons in Wales and formed the Anglo-Saxon Church. There is no trace, or vestige of an "Independent British Church;" as Mr. Freeman says, the idea is without historical foundation. The mythical "Monks from the East" who are said to have converted England, live only in the imagination. No date can be assigned of their coming; no name can be given them. No Synod, no Bishop, no renowned name in British annals can be produced as lending a shadow of substance to the modern idea of an independent Church. We have explained the origin of the differences, which are the sole foundations of this ideal Church, and shown that they were only *astronomical* not *theological*, and that they by no means implied a rejection of Pontifical authority. We give names, and dates, and indisputable documents in our contention. If historic certainty can ever be had, then it is historically certain that England received its admission into the Christian family from Rome, and that its Church, in its early stages, was ever subject to the supreme spiritual jurisdiction of the Roman See.

That Church whose early Stages we have hurriedly followed lived on for a thousand years from Augustine. Its influence softened the fierce barbaric Saxons, and the sullen Britons; it blended them into one nation and laid strong and deep the foundations of after greatness. The religion of Eleutherius and Gregory filled the land with Saints and learned men; it was interwoven with the constitution, and gave to Magna Charta its elements of true liberty and enlightened government. The heroes of Cressy, of Poitiers, of Agincourt, of the Crusades, revered it, even though their lives may not have always been in accordance with its teachings. Its full effects on the history of the world cannot yet be known, for England, although not now professing it, is still in a great measure swayed in her governmental policy by it, and England's race is not yet run. Very many who now boast of their privileges as British freemen, think little of the men who, headed by an Archbishop of Canterbury, wrung the charter of their liberties from a tyrant.

The days in which we live are very different from those in which the events described in this Lecture transpired. If St. David, St. Augustine, St. Cuthbert, or any of those Saints whose names are household words in England, were to revisit this world, they would be lost in wonder at the transformation and progress. London would terrify them. But if they found their way into the Church where Cardinal Manning presides they would find themselves at home. The same rites and ceremonies, the same vestments and office, the same language of a thousand years ago would speak to their souls, and cause them to recognize the heirs of their greatness and their glory.

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